



In re ROYKA AND MARTIN

(CCPA)

180 USPQ 580

Decided Feb. 7, 1974

No. 9092

U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals

Headnotes

PATENTS

1. Patentability — Anticipation — Combining references (§ 51.205)

To support anticipation rejection, all elements of claim must be found in reference.

2. Construction of specification and claims — Broad or narrow — In general (§ 22.101)

Construction of specification and claims — By specification and drawings — In general (§ 22.251)

Claims are not read in a vacuum; while they are given broadest reasonable interpretation during prosecution, their terms still must be given meaning called for by specification of which they form a part.

3. Patentability — Anticipation — In general (§ 51.201)

Anticipation requires a finding that claimed invention be disclosed; it is not enough to say that applicants' invention and the reference are both usable for instruction and both consist of permanent and removable printings on paper.

4. Patentability — Subject matter for patent monopoly — Printed matter (§ 51.611)

It is not a valid reason for rejection that claim is merely a printed matter variation of design of reference; printed matter may very well constitute structural limitations upon which patentability can be predicated.

Particular patents—Answer System

Royka and Martin, Responsive Answer System, claims 28 and 30 to 36 of application allowed.

Case History and Disposition:**Appeal from Board of Appeals of the Patent Office.**

Application for patent of Stephen F. Royka and Robert G. Martin, Serial No. 648,701, filed June 26, 1967; Patent Office Group 336. From decision rejecting claims 28 and 30 to 36, applicants appeal. Reversed.

Attorneys:

MICHAEL H. SHANAHAN, Fairport, N. Y. (THOMAS M. WEBSTER, Fairport, N. Y., and BORIS HASKELL and PARIS, HASKELL & LEVINE, both of Arlington, Va., of counsel) for appellants.

JOSEPH F. NAKAMURA (FRED W. SHERLING of counsel) for Commissioner of Patents.

Judge:

Before MARKEY, Chief Judge, and RICH, BALDWIN, LANE, and MILLER, Associate Judges.

Opinion Text**Opinion By:**

RICH, Judge.

This appeal is from the decision of the Patent Office Board of Appeals affirming the examiner's rejection of claims 28 and 30-36 of application serial No. 648,701, filed June 26, 1967, entitled "Responsive Answer System." We reverse.

The Invention

The appealed claims are directed to a device in the nature of an answer sheet for use in self-instruction and testing. The answer sheet may be associated with questions or separate therefrom. The essential features of the invention are that there are printed on the answer sheet in "response areas" meaningful information in permanent printing and confusing information in printing which can be removed, as by an eraser, both being legible so that a student, seeing a choice of answers to a question, must make a selection. Having made a selection, he then applies an eraser to the selected response area and some of the information will be readily removed. What remains advises him of the correctness or otherwise of his answer. The following figures from the drawings are illustrative:

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Fig. 1A shows two response areas to a given question before any removing action by the student has taken place

and Fig. 1B shows the permanent information remaining in each after erasure of the removable information. Of course, if the student makes an initial choice of area A, showing up "YES" or some other indication of a correct answer, he will not need to proceed further and erase the B area. In a modified form of the invention, a wrong selection, plus erasure, may expose, instead of or in addition to a statement that the answer is wrong, a number or other reference to further material which is to be studied.

A preferred method of printing the permanent meaningful information and the removable confusing information is by that type of xerography in which a fusible toner is used, the permanence of the printing depending on the extent to which the toner image is "fixed" or fused by heat. By successive printings of the two kinds of information with fixing to different degrees, one image can be made permanent and the other made subject to easy removal, both images retaining such similarity of appearance that the user of the answer sheet cannot tell them apart.

Claim 28 is the principal claim, all others being dependent thereon, and reads as follows:

28. A device for selectively indicating information comprising
a support having response areas for presenting information for selection,
permanent printing indicative of meaningful information permanently fixed to said support within a response area, and
removable printing indicative of confusing information removably fixed to said support within a response area,
said meaningful and confusing information being substantially legible even when said permanent and removable printing are fixed over one another on said support,
said permanent and removable printing being substantially similar such that an observer cannot determine which information is permanent and which is removable
whereby the information within a response area is selected by attempting to remove the printing therein with the failure to remove printing identifying meaningful information.

Claims 30-36 add limitations which need not be considered except for noting that claims 33 and 34 alone specify the use of a xerographic toner, for which reason they were rejected on a different ground from the other claims.

The Rejection

The following references were relied on:

Reid et al. (Reid) 356,695 Jan. 25, 1887

Bernstein et al. (Bernstein) 3,055,117 Sep. 25, 1962

Lein et al. (Lein) 3,364,857 Jan. 23, 1968 (filed Feb. 2, 1966)

Claims 28, 30, 31, and 32 were rejected as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102 by Bernstein; claims 28, 31, 32, 35, and 36 were rejected as anticipated under § 102 by Reid; and claims 33 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 for obviousness, on either Bernstein or Reid in view of Lein. These were the examiner's rejections and the board affirmed them, adhering to its decision on reconsideration.

Bernstein discloses an answer sheet in which printed information representing a response is "temporarily concealed from the observer" and he discloses a number of different ways of effectively concealing the response. His specification states:

The objects of the invention are accomplished by utilizing the hiding media to confuse the participant and to render the response and the hiding media indistinguishable and thus conceal the presence, absence, nature or position of the response from the participant. This may be effectuated by careful attention being paid to a number of factors including the design, color and position of the hiding or confusing media.

Fig. 1 of Bernstein's drawings illustrates some of his concealing means:

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The following is the written description:

Referring now to the drawing, FIG. 1 illustrates some of the many optically confusing patterns which may be positioned between the printed structure to be concealed and the point of observation. Column 11 shows the information which is to be concealed. This information is repeated in columns 12 through 16 but in each case is concealed by a pattern in accordance with the present invention. Column 12 utilizes a pattern comprising an alphabetical maze in both line and half tone screen. Column 13 utilizes a pattern comprising an absorbing field having a plurality of irregular dot-like interstices. Column 14 utilizes a pattern comprising a maze of plus signs combined with dots. Columns 15 and 16 illustrate irregular and non-repetitious patterns.

Bernstein says that if at least 50% of the response is actually covered by the opaque portions of the confusion pattern, complete concealment is obtained. He also says that added means of concealment may be used, such as scoring and embossing and perforating the paper in order to scatter the light or let it shine through.

Reid is entitled "Transformation Picture and Print." The invention is said to be useful for advertisements, Christmas cards, birthday cards, valentines, and the like and as a source of amusement and instruction for children. It consists of a picture or print, part of which is permanently printed and part of which is removable from the paper on which it is printed. For the latter various soluble undercoatings or inks are described. If the picture is washed with a solvent, which may be water, the removable part disappears and the pictorial and/or typographic matter changes. The invention is illustrated by a typical nineteenth century temperance propaganda piece depicting the evils of drink. In the finished picture there are three scenes from left to right: Scene 1, the innocent child leads her father home from the pub; Scene 2, Father sits slumped in the kitchen chair with his bottle beside him, the family wash hanging above his head, this picture being entitled "The Effects of Drink"; Scene 3, Mother stands in front of a sign reading "Pawn Shop." Across the bottom of the picture is a legend which says "Wash the above and see what water will do." Fig. II shows the result of washing with water: Scene 1, a handsome young man and his happy daughter stroll on the street; Scene 2, Father sits erect in a well-appointed room at a cloth-covered table, apparently having a cup of tea, obviously a gentleman; Scene 3, Mother beams from the sideline and the Pawn Shop sign has vanished. Two new subscriptions appear and the words "The" and "Drink" have disappeared, the resultant being a new picture title reading "The Beneficial Effects of Temperance." "The Beneficial" and "Temperance" were covered by some soluble opaque in the original picture. No doubt the overall effect is instruction. Perhaps there was amusement in bringing about the transformation.

Lein relates to xerography and is relied on only for its disclosure of the removability of partially fused toner and the permanence of fully fused toner.

Opinion

[1] As to the § 102 anticipation rejections, it will suffice to consider independent claim 28. If it is not fully met by Reid or Bernstein, neither are the more limited dependent claims. It is elementary that to support an anticipation rejection, all elements of the claim must be found in the reference. We do not find claim 28 anticipated by Bernstein because, as we read the claim, it requires the display of *legible* meaningful and *legible* confusing *information* simultaneously, between which the user of the device may make a selection before he undertakes to remove any of the information from the response area selected by him. The element we find most clearly missing, contrary to the reasoning of the examiner and the board, is the legible confusing *information*. The Patent Office proposes to read this limitation on Bernstein's confusion patterns which are nothing but meaningless obscuring screens, conveying no information and providing the user with no basis for making a *selection*, as called for by

claim 28. In appellants' device the legible confusing information—i.e., the wrong answers—are legible in the sense that they can be read as intelligible words, not merely a jumble of type serving to obscure the words of the wrong answers.

Appellants were fully aware of Bernstein and discussed its disclosures in their specification, distinguishing from this and other prior art, saying, in part:

The inventive concept hereof confuses not by physical blocking as taught by the prior art, but by compounding, associating (including disarranging) permanent information with confusing information, usually at least some of which is similar in character to the permanent information as to render it impossible to tell which is permanent and which is removable confusing information. In the invention, generally no attempt is made to designedly physically cover the permanent information, but to confuse it beyond interpretation by the presentation of extraneous, removable, confusing information.

[2] Claims are not to be read in a vacuum and while it is true they are to be given the broadest *reasonable* interpretation during

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prosecution, their terms still have to be given the meaning called for by the specification of which they form a part. We cannot read the terms "legible" and "information" on Bernstein's confusion patterns, as did the examiner and the board. They are not "legible," as appellants use the term, and they convey no information.

As to anticipation by Reid, we find neither appellants' basic concept nor the substance of claim 28 to be disclosed. Apparently the solicitor could find little to support the rejection in Reid for all he says in his brief—so far as claim 28 is concerned—is:

Reid discloses a sheet which may be used for instruction and which may have a removable design partly covering a fixed design * * *. Therefore, the disclosure of the reference encompasses the arrangement wherein a removable design covers a fixed design with both designs being substantially legible.

[3] But claim 28 does not call for an arrangement wherein a removable design covers a fixed design. It calls for response areas, which Reid does not have, containing meaningful information in permanent printing together with removable printing conveying confusing information, both legible at the same time, between which a "selection" can be made. The only choice offered to the user by Reid is to follow the instruction to wash the whole visible picture with water or other solvent, thus removing the overprinting, to discover what the permanent picture is. The Patent Office attempt to read claim 28 on this reference is a tour de force. We hold that Reid does not anticipate for failure to meet the limitations of claim 28 to "response areas," to the presentation of two categories of information (meaningful-permanent and removable-confusing) within such areas, and the possibility of selection. Anticipation requires a finding that the claimed invention be disclosed. It is not enough to say that appellants' invention and the reference are both usable for instruction and both consist of permanent and removable printings on paper, as did the solicitor.

The dependent claims rejected with claim 28, as anticipated under § 102, are not anticipated since claim 28 is not anticipated. Some of them merely add features which are disclosed by the references and some do not. Insofar as they do not, they further negative anticipation. The examiner recognized this fact as to claims 33 and 34, which are limited to xerography, and therefore did not reject them under § 102. Similarly, he did not reject claim 30 on Reid or claims 35 and 36 on Bernstein. We find that claims 35 and 36 contain limitations which additionally distinguish from Reid. We have already noted that Reid has no "response areas" as required by claim 28 and so Reid does not disclose the structure of claim 35 which additionally requires both the correct and incorrect answers to appear within the same response area.

[4] As to claim 36, the examiner said it "is merely a printed matter variation of the design of the reference,"

Reid. This is not a valid reason for rejection. Printed matter may very well constitute structural limitations upon which patentability can be predicated. We have commented on this matter in *In re Jones*, 54 CCPA 1218, 373 F.2d 1007, 153 USPQ 77 (1967); and *In re Miller*, 57 CCPA 809, 418 F.2d 1392, 164 USPQ 46 (1969), and will not repeat ourselves. The limitations of claim 36 are not remotely suggested by Reid.

There remains the § 103 rejection of claims 33 and 34. Do they, taken together with all of the limitations of claim 28 from which they depend, define obvious subject matter? The difference between claim 28 and these two dependent claims is that they add the limitations to xerography. If Bernstein and Reid showed the claimed invention except for xerography, the addition of the Lein reference would make the subject matter of the claims obvious. But that is not the situation here. Adding the knowledge of xerographic technology to Bernstein or Reid still does not make the invention of claims 33 and 34 obvious for the same reasons we have given above in discussing anticipation. The essence of appellants' invention, as set forth in claim 28, is still missing notwithstanding the addition of the Lein reference and we see nothing in the combinations of references which would have made the invention obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time it was made. We will, therefore, reverse this rejection.

The decision of the board is *reversed*.

- End of Case -



In re Wilson

(CCPA)

165 USPQ 494

Decided May 7, 1970

No. 8271

U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals

Headnotes

PATENTS

1. Claims - Indefinite - In general (§ 20.551)

Construction of specification and claims - In general (§ 22.01)

All words in claim must be considered in judging patentability of claim against prior art; if no reasonably definite meaning can be ascribed to terms in claim, subject matter does not become obvious - the claim becomes indefinite.

Particular patents-Brush

Wilson, Treated Brush and Brush Treating Composition, claims 1 to 4, 8 to 10, and 15 to 21 of application allowed.

Case History and Disposition:

Page 494

Appeal from Board of Appeals of the Patent Office.

Application for patent of David W. Wilson, Serial No. 332,321, filed Nov. 5, 1963; Patent Office Group 146. From decision rejecting claims 1 to 4, 8 to 10, and 15 to 21, applicant appeals. Reversed.

Attorneys:

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Oberlin, Maky, Donnelly & Renner, William E. Thomson, Jr., and John C. Oberlin, all of Cleveland, Ohio, for appellant.

Joseph Schimmel (Raymond E. Martin of counsel) for Commissioner of Patents.

Judge:

Before Rich, Acting Chief Judge, Almond, Baldwin, and Lane, Associate Judges, and Ford, Judge, United States Customs Court, sitting by designation.

Opinion Text

Opinion By:

Lane, Judge.

This appeal is from the decision of the Patent Office Board of Appeals, which affirmed the rejection of claims 1-4, 8-10, and 15-21 in appellant's application serial No. 332,321, filed November 5, 1963, for "Treated Brush and Brush Treating Composition." Four other claims have been allowed. We conclude that the board's decision must be reversed.

The Disclosure

Appellant's disclosure discusses certain problems in the treatment of power-driven rotary brushes. According to the disclosure, it was desirable to produce a composition for treating the brush bristles, whereby the ability of the bristles to hold abrasive particles would be enhanced. It discloses that the treatment composition should have a strength of adhesion to the brush bristles sufficiently great to prevent such composition from transferring excessively to the object being brushed; that the treatment material should wear at substantially the same rate as the brush bristles; that the material should have a high temperature softening point; and that the strength of adhesion between the treating composition and the abrasive particles must be sufficient to withstand the centrifugal force which normally would tend to throw the abrasive outwardly from the brush. The disclosure states that previously known brush-treating compositions did not accomplish all these objectives and had a tendency to dry and lose their tackiness over a period of time, thus becoming useless for holding abrasive particles on the bristles.

The disclosure states that appellant discovered that a composition having a high temperature softening point and a high degree of tackiness could be produced if a film-forming resin were blended with a tackifier resin which was incompatible with (insoluble in) the film-forming resin. The resulting composition would have two distinct phases: a continuous phase comprised of film-forming resin, either alone or saturated with a small quantity of tackifier resin, and a dispersed phase comprised of small particles of tackifier resin. The two resins may be either completely or partially incompatible, and the disclosure states that the more insoluble the resins, the greater the tack which the composition possesses. Appellant also disclosed that certain plasticizers could be added to render the resins more incompatible, thus further increasing the tack of the composition. Finally, appellant stated that the entire composition could be dissolved in a volatile solvent to allow easy application to the brush, the solvent being one which quickly evaporates upon such application.

The specification contains a list of suitable film-forming resins, including ethyl cellulose, nitro cellulose, cellulose acetate, polyvinyl acetate and cis-polyisoprene, among other materials. A list of tackifiers is given, including certain esters of abietic acid, polyvinyl ethyl ether, coumarone indene resin and terpene resins. A list of plasticizers is also given. The specification then gives four ex

amples showing how to combine various film-formers, tackifiers, plasticizers and solvents to obtain brush-treating compositions of the desired characteristics, and explains how to apply them to brushes.

The Claims

In view of the result we reach, we find that claims 1 and 8 are representative:

1. A two-phase brush treating composition having a high softening point and sufficient tack to retain abrasive material firmly adhered to brush fill material comprising a film-forming resin and a tackifier resin which is incompatible with said film-forming resin, said two phases comprising a continuous phase formed of said film-forming resin and a dispersed phase formed of small particles of tackifier resin.

8. In combination, a rotary brush having brush fill material and a two-phase pressure sensitive adhesive brush treating composition adhered thereto having a high softening point and sufficient tack to retain abrasive material firmly adhered to such brush fill material comprising a film-forming resin and a tackifier resin which is incompatible with said film-forming resin, said two phases comprising a continuous phase formed of said film-forming resin and a dispersed phase formed of small particles of tackifier resin.

The remaining claims on appeal are narrower, containing recitations of specific resins, plasticizers, etc.

The Prior Art

Grantham ¹ relates to coatings for film material and discloses a coating composition comprising a cellulose derivative film-former, a blending resin, a plasticizer, and an organic solvent. Grantham teaches that the blending agent and the film-former should be compatible.

Depew ² teaches the preparation of emulsions consisting of a continuous phase of water and a discontinuous phase of elastomer particles and particles of a volatile hydrocarbon, with vulcanizing ingredients and other additives dispersed in the hydrocarbon particles. Depew then states that where a dispersion with additional adhesive properties is desired, an adhesive, such as certain of the tackifier resins disclosed by appellants, can be added to the emulsion, and that

[t]his adhesive can be water soluble or dispersed as particles. * * * The chemistry of the adhesive component is not critical to this invention. The important thing is that the deposited film shall be tacky and adhesive.

Sergi ³ relates to adhesives suitable for installation of floor-covering products such as linoleum. Sergi's composition consists of a tackifier resin dispersed in a latex binder; the tackifier and latex must be compatible with one another, according to the Sergi disclosure.

Vaughan ⁴ teaches impregnating a fibrous buffing wheel with an aqueous emulsion consisting of a tacky resin and an emulsifier or stabilizer such as glue or gum.

The Board

The board found the composition claims to be unpatentable over Depew, Sergi or Grantham under 35 U.S.C. 103. The board reached this conclusion after noting that each of the three references shows some of the film-formers, tackifiers, plasticizers and solvents appearing in appellant's lists. The board found that the recited limitation of incompatibility was too relative a term to distinguish over the compositions of the references.

The board found that the claims to the treated brush were unpatentable, under 35 U.S.C. 103, over Vaughan in view of Sergi or Depew. Since Vaughan shows treating brushes, the board apparently considered it obvious to treat brushes with compositions which it thought were made obvious by Sergi or Depew.

The board also affirmed the rejection of certain claims for being "broader than the disclosure" under 35 U.S.C. 112. The board's basis for this rejection was that the specification did not provide adequate guidelines for making a selection among the various disclosed ingredients, nor among other materials which are not disclosed but would be included by the claims.

Opinion

We first treat the rejection under section 112. This rejection is in effect an attack on the specification as being

insufficient to teach how to practice the broad invention claimed. The rejection is therefore under the first paragraph of section 112. The board's position, as mentioned above, was that the specification did not teach how to select ingredients so that the desired incompatibility would result. We disagree with the board's position on this point. First of all, appellant provided four examples, each specifying the nature and amounts of materials to be used. Secondly,

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the record indicates that it involves only routine experimentation to find out which resins are incompatible. The examiner admitted as much when, with regard to obviousness, he said "selecting the proper tackifier and film-forming resin from those listed in the references to form an emulsion or two-phase composition would be within the expected skill of the art and would merely involve routine experimentation." We conclude that appellant has provided a sufficient specification to support the claims here in issue.

[1] Turning to the rejection of the claims for obviousness, we again disagree with the board's position. The board has disregarded the term "incompatible," as used in the claims, because it is "too relative" to distinguish over the compositions of the references. Appellant contends this limitation is essential in defining his invention. There has been no rejection here for indefiniteness, under the second paragraph of section 112. Rather than reject the claims as indefinite, the board chose to ignore the language it considered indefinite, and proceeded as though that language were not in the claims. The board said, in effect, that since we do not know what "incompatible" means, and the rest of the claim defines obvious subject matter, there is no basis for concluding unobviousness. This reasoning is incorrect. All words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art. If no reasonably definite meaning can be ascribed to certain terms in the claim, the subject matter does not become obvious-the claim becomes indefinite. In the present case, we think the term "incompatible" is defined with reasonable definiteness in the specification. While it is true that the word is not perfectly precise, under the circumstances of the present case there appears to be no other way for appellant to describe his discovery. In any event, the ignoring of this term by the board renders its conclusion of obviousness unsupported. None of the references discloses a two-phase composition of incompatible resins or suggests that such a composition would have the properties disclosed by appellant. Grantham and Sergi both expressly teach that the components of their compositions should be compatible. Neither Vaughan nor Depew uses a resin as the continuous phase. While Depew states, as quoted above, that the adhesive material may be dispersed as particles in the continuous phase, and hence be incompatible with the continuous phase material, it cannot be ignored that Depew's continuous phase is of water, not a film-forming resin as recited in appellant's claims. Furthermore, there is no suggestion in Depew or Vaughan that there are advantages in using an adhesive which is insoluble in the aqueous phase. There is nothing of record, therefore, from which we can properly conclude that the subject matter of appellant's claims would have been obvious at the time of his invention. The decision of the board must accordingly be *reversed*.

Footnotes

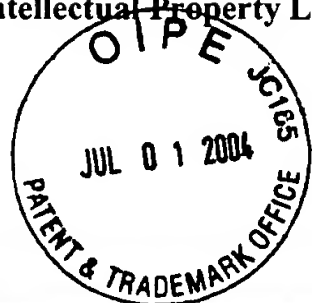
Footnote 1. U. S. Pat. 3,051,670, issued August 28, 1962.

Footnote 2. U. S. Pat. 2,933,469, issued April 19, 1960.

Footnote 3. U. S. Pat. 3,015,638, issued January 2, 1962.

Footnote 4. U. S. Pat. 2,890,136, issued June 9, 1959.

- End of Case -



Hodosh v. Block Drug Co., Inc.

(CA FC)

229 USPQ 182

Decided March 24, 1986

No. 85-2607

U.S. Court of Appeals Federal Circuit

Headnotes

PATENTS

1. Patentability -- Invention -- Specific cases -- Chemical (§ 51.5093)

Summary judgment holding that claimed tooth desensitizer was invalid for obviousness was improper, in view of existing questions of material fact concerning various terms used in Chinese and European references.

2. Patentability -- Invention -- In general (§ 51.501)

Secondary considerations and additional evidence likely to be considered at trial must be considered in obviousness determination.

Particular patents -- Dental Treatments

3,863,006, Hodosh, Method for Desensitizing Teeth, holding of invalidity reversed.

Case History and Disposition:

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**Appeal from District Court for the District of New Jersey, Sarokin, J.; 226 USPQ 645 .
Action by Milton Hodosh, and Richardson-Vicks, Inc., against Block Drug Company,
Inc., and Dentco, Inc., for patent infringement. From summary judgment for defendants,
plaintiffs appeal. Reversed and remanded.**

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Jerome G. Lee, and Morgan, Finnegan, Pine, Foley & Lee, both of New York, N.Y. (William S. Feiler, Maria C.H. Lin, Morgan, Finnegan, Pine, Foley & Lee, Marvin C. Soffen, Edward A. Meilman, and Ostrolenk, Faber, Gerb & Soffen, all of New York, N.Y., on the brief) for appellees.

Judge:

Before Rich, Davis, and Baldwin, Circuit Judges.

Opinion Text**Opinion By:**

Rich, Circuit Judge.

This appeal is from the July 12, 1985, judgment of the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, 226 USPQ 645 , granting summary judgment to Block Drug Company, Inc., et al. (Block) and holding that all six claims of patent No. 3,863,006 for "Method of Desensitizing Teeth" ('006 patent), issued to Dr. Milton Hodosh and licensed to Richardson-Vicks, Inc. (collectively, Hodosh), are invalid for obviousness under 35 USC 103. We reverse remand.

Background

Tooth desensitizers reduce discomfort and pain caused by tooth hypersensitivity or exposed dentin, the portion of the tooth between the enamel and the pulp which includes a myriad of microscopic tubules. Persons suffering from this condition react painfully to hot or cold foods, citric acid or sweets, or everyday chemical, thermal, or tactile stimuli including toothbrush contact.

Milton Hodosh, a practicing dentist for about thirty years, independently developed the claimed subject matter of the '006 patent and granted Richardson-Vicks an exclusive license to make, use, and sell the claimed invention; the latter markets its tooth desensitizing toothpaste under the trademark "Denquel."

Claim 1 of the '006 patent ¹ reads:

The method of desensitizing hypersensitive dentin and cementum by applying thereto an agent the essential ingredient of which is a nitrate of one of the following alkali metals: potassium, lithium or sodium said nitrate comprising between 1 percent and 20 percent by weight of said agent.

The remaining claims appear in the opinion below.

Appellee Block has, since 1961, marketed a tooth desensitizing toothpaste, covered by its patent No. 2,122,483 (the Rosenthal patent) for "Strontium Ion Toothpaste" issued in 1964, under the trademark "Sensodyne." The Rosenthal patent and the '006 patent disclose toothpaste formulae which are the same except that the latter contains, as a desensitizing agent, potassium nitrate instead of the Rosenthal-Block strontium chloride. After requesting and being denied a license under the '006 patent, Block developed its own potassium nitrate-containing tooth-desensitizing toothpaste called "Promise" and "Sensodyne-F." ²

March 30, 1983, Hodosh sued Block alleging that the sale of "Promise" and "Sensodyne-F" contributorily infringed and actively induced infringement of the '006 patent. Block answered and counterclaimed alleging patent misuse and consequent unenforceability of the '006 patent. On July 11, 1984, Block moved for summary judgment as to both misuse and patent invalidity. Oral argument was heard October 16, 1984, and decision was reserved. June 14, 1985, the reported decision was handed down granting the motion as to patent invalidity and dismissing the motion on misuse as moot, resulting in the judgment now on appeal.

The district court heard no expert testimony, but did hear arguments of counsel, receive briefs, review exhibits, and had before it declarations and affidavits from experts on both sides commenting on the eight prior art references involved here, including the Rosenthal patent. The court determined that there were no genuine issues of material fact and concluded as a matter of law that the claims of the '006 patent were invalid under §103 because the Rosenthal patent disclosed each element claimed in the '006 patent except the potassium nitrate, which, in its view, was disclosed in two Chinese references, both based on ancient Chinese writings. The court also stated that six European references supported its conclusion of obviousness.

Because the appropriateness of summary judgment is determined on an analysis of the facts, *First National Bank of Arizona v. Cities Service Co.*, 391 U.S. 253 (1968), and because everything about these references, as a whole, *see, e.g., Interconnect Planning Corp. v. Feil*, 774 F.2d 1132, 1138, 227 USPQ 543, 547-48 (Fed. Cir. 1985), is important to our determination, we review the record and lay out the relevant portions of the references in some detail.

A. The Chinese References

1. The Grand Dictionary of Chinese Medicine and Drugs (The Grand Dictionary)

The *Grand Dictionary*, published in Hong Kong in 1963 and written in Chinese, is based on ancient Chinese compilations assembled roughly 500 years ago from works of physicians going back 4000-5000 years. Only a portion of the 1963 Chinese text was before the court and is before us on appeal. For purposes of this litigation, that portion was translated into English by Block's translator, Roger Wei-Ming Tsao (Mr. Cao). Mr. Cao is a doctor of Chinese medicine and a bilingual tutor. Block's other expert, Dr. Stephen Wei, a professor of dentistry fluent in Chinese, concurred in that translation. The writings from which the *Grand Dictionary* was compiled are not in evidence nor are any earlier writings.

In a nutshell, the district court relied upon the *Grand Dictionary* because of its discussion of "xiao shi" to which the Grand Dictionary associates the name "niter" and the chemical composition KNO_3 and the ability to cure, inter alia, tooth pain. The court's opinion was that this reference teaches the use of xiao shi, which is the same as niter and is therefore the same as potassium nitrate, to cure tooth pain; thus, the teachings of the Rosenthal patent and the *Grand Dictionary* show that the '006 invention would have been obvious.

The following discussion and quotations are part of an attempt to convey the nature of the *Grand Dictionary*. The translated portion of the *Grand Dictionary* is entitled "Niter." The text under the first subheading "Nomenclature" reads: "It was so named because it has the power to consume various stones." Under "Other Names Stated in Classical Medical Books," the text reads "Mang Xiao (Bie-Lu), Bitter Xiao (Zhen-Quan), Flaming Xiao (Tu-Su) . . . and Xiao-Shi" Thereafter, following "Foreign Names," the *Grand Dictionary* reads: "Salpetrae, Salnitri (in Latin); Niter (in English); and Salpoter (in German)." One page later, " KNO_3 " is listed under "Chemical Composition."

The portion upon which Block and the district court rely to show that this substance cures tooth pain is headed "Collective Statements" and reads:

(Ming): Li-Shi-Zhen said: It cures summer infections and the catching of colds. It cures acute enteritis with severe vomiting, exertion through excessive sexual activity, black jaundice, chronic abdominal pain, conjunctivitis, headaches and tooth pain.

The next three or so pages of the *Grand Dictionary* list the ailments that this substance cures. An interesting but not atypical paragraph reads: "For curing the paralysis of the four limbs, leprosy or problems caused by Taoist stone eating." This substance also apparently cures indigestion, lack of energy, typhoid, cataracts, and much, much more. The *Grand Dictionary* compares what appears to

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be various forms in which xiao shi is found, and the characteristics of each. An excerpt is:

Pu-Xiao (Na_2SO_4) has the nature of water, tastes salty, and its flavor is cold. It can only descend and cannot ascend. It is Yin within Yin -- that's why it can cleanse the accumulation in the gastrointestinal tract and can expel the San-Jiao devilish fire. Whereas Niter (KNO_3) has the nature of fire, tastes bitter and spicy, tastes slightly salty and has a flavor which is very warm, it's [sic] nature is ascending. It is fire within water. That's why it can break the accumulation and disperse hardness, and cure the febrile diseases.

2. *Ben Cao Gang Mu*

Ben Cao Gang Mu (*Ben Cao*) is a treatise on Chinese Medicine published in Hong Kong, in Chinese, in 1930, 1954, and 1965, but was originally written by Li-Shi-Zhen who lived during the Ming Dynasty.³ Like the *Grand Dictionary*, only a portion of the Chinese text *Ben Cao* is in evidence and that portion was translated by Mr. Cao and Dr. Wei for purposes of this litigation. The district court relied upon *Ben Cao* because it discusses "xiao shi," which the translation of *Ben Cao* states is "niter" and associates the ability to cure "tooth pain (Ya Tong or Ya Teng)."

It is important to note, and the district court appeared to accept as fact, that the portion of the *Grand Dictionary* relied upon was compiled during the Ming Dynasty of the 13th to 15th centuries in *Ben Cao Gang Mu* so that the relevant portion of the *Grand Dictionary* is substantially a restatement of *Ben Cao* with some modification by an unidentified author. The court stated that these two references "quote the same Ming Dynasty source as labeling KNO_3 for tooth pain."

The *Ben Cao* translation is entitled "Xiao-Shi (Niter)" and refers to the same "Other names" for this substance listed in the *Grand Dictionary*. With respect to the quoted sections above, the *Ben Cao* translation is nearly verbatim. It has this to say about tooth pain:

Da Ming states: It cures summer infections and the catching of colds, acute enteritis with severe vomiting, exertion thru excessive sexual activity and black jaundice, chronic abdominal pain, conjunctivitis, headache and tooth pain (Ya-Tong or Ya Teng).

Hodosh argues that summary judgment was inappropriate; issues of fact as to the meanings of xiao shi and ya tong remain because a skilled dental researcher would surely seek and obtain a complete translation of the *Grand Dictionary* and of the other ancient Chinese references and would read those references carefully. Hodosh also argues that the ancient references should be dismissed because a person skilled in the art would find them incredible and would regard them as a quagmire of medical and dental nonsense. It therefore takes issue with the court's holding quoted below which apparently precluded inquiry into the accuracy of the references by one skilled in the art:

[A]ttacks upon the translation leading up to the prior art reference embodied in the *Grand Dictionary of Chinese Medicine and Drugs*, . . . or upon Chinese medicine as a whole, . . . are not here regarded as particularly pertinent, since they require skill beyond the scope of the "experienced researcher in dental fields"

Hodosh relies heavily on its expert's, Dr. Shklar's, testimony about the Chinese references: "[T]hey represent in

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modern terms, materials that are rarely comprehensible and frequently contradictory in their literal terms. The materials are largely seen by contemporary medical scientists as absurd; no serious medical researcher would waste his or her time with them." ⁴ Hodosh also contests this holding by the district court:

Nor, if it is true that KNO₃ alleviates tooth sensitivity, is such reference in the prior art rebutted by the existence of errors in the reference such as, for example, the claim that KNO₃ is a cure for "exertion through excessive sexual activity." Whatever the merits of the other aspects of the Chinese references, the fact that they reveal KNO₃ to be a cure for ya tong is what is dispositive here. The reference clearly discloses such function of potassium nitrate, albeit in the context of otherwise incredible, and even erroneous descriptions of the compound's quality.

With respect to the specific meaning of xiao shi as used in these references, both Dr. Shklar and Hodosh's other expert, Mr. Yen, a professional translator of Chinese and English lan

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guages, stated that the compiler of the *Grand Dictionary* erred in associating potassium nitrate or niter with xiao shi. Mr. Yen states that he

was not able to render one single precise version because various dictionaries contain different and even conflicting definitions. For example, *Source of Words*, a Chinese language dictionary, published by Commercial Press, Taiwan, which has editions dating back to 1915, defines "Xiao-Shi" as "Mang-Xiao" on page 1255, and under "Mang-Xiao" on page 1770, reference is made that "Mang-Xiao" is "Liu-Suen-Na," and on page 1523 "Liu-Suen-Na" is defined as sodium sulfate (Na₂SO₄ · 10H₂O).

Mr. Yen also stated that "Xiao-Shi could be more than one material and that more than one material may be represented by the term 'Xiao-Shi'."

Dr. Shklar concurred:

In my opinion, therefore, the answer to the question: What was "Xiao-Shi," is that it represented many different materials which cannot be identified with certainty.

Thus, these Exhibits did not describe potassium nitrate to one skilled in the art any more than any of the hundreds of salts, ores and oxides that possess some of the enumerated properties.

In addition, Dr. Shklar stated: "It is insufficient to simply state, as the Block translator does, that 'Xiao-Shi' is 'niter,' and then cite a modern dictionary to 'establish' that 'niter' is potassium nitrate." With respect to both the *Grand Dictionary* and *Ben Cao*, he stated that "the translator appears to have inserted the term 'niter' into the text where the phrase 'consumer of stones' actually belongs."

Block's arguments, on the other hand, in part based on the short affidavit by Mr. Wei, substantially follow the district court's opinion. Block also challenges the competence of Hodosh's experts stating that they "either had no knowledge or training in the Chinese language or Chinese medicine or were unfamiliar with dentistry or medicine generally." Block also emphasizes that the Chinese references correctly disclose many of potassium nitrate's characteristics, like burning with a violet flame, useability for making signal fires and gun powder, and its water solubility; these three properties of xiao shi in the Chinese references definitely confirm, according to Block, that xiao shi is potassium nitrate, KNO₃.

B. The European Prior Art

This art is contained in six references and was not relied upon to any significant degree by Block or the district court. Hodosh scarcely mentions it on appeal, instead preferring to show the existence of genuine issues of material fact with respect to the Chinese references. After concluding that using potassium nitrate to cure tooth pain would have been obvious from Rosenthal in view of the Chinese art, the court stated: "Such holding is strengthened by the European prior art which, while ambiguous because of the several conflicting definitions in the

term 'niter,' at least suggest to one skilled in the art that potassium nitrate ought to be tried as a cure for tooth pain in general."

Block submitted no affidavits that addressed the substance of the European references. Hodosh's Dr. Shklar, on the other hand, stated why this art, part of the "humors, spirits and Alchemy of the Dark Ages" having whatever medicinal effect they did by virtue of their use of wine, opium, or other narcotic substances, would have been questioned by one skilled in the art. He specifically contends that Block's translation of "nitre" is erroneous: "it is common knowledge that these terms meant sodium carbonate and/or sodium carbonate-sodium bicarbonate mixture. . . ."

To afford a glimpse of the nature of these references, an interesting and typical excerpt, one quoted by the district court, based upon a statement by the long since deceased French surgeon Guy de Chauliac reads that "a mixture of 'cuttlebone, small white sea shells, pumice, burnt stag's horn, *nitre*, alum, rock salt, burnt roots of iris, aristolochia, and reeds' could create an effective dentifrice." (District court's emphasis.) Three of the European references are based on that statement. The district court noted the others:

Additionally, a 1693 treatise by the British Professor of Physics William Salmon states that nitrum "held in the Mouth . . . immediately helps the Toothach, if burnt and used in a Dentifrice, it cleanses and whitens the Teeth." . . . Similarly, a reference work by Hardianus a Mynsicht, translated into English in 1682, describes a mixture, including "nitre" as a "tincture for the toothache." . . . Finally, Pliny the Elder, in his *Historie of the World, The Second Tome*, translated into English in 1601, describes the use of nitre to "easeth the toothach, if the mouth and gums be washed therewith," or if burned, as a dentifrice. [Reference to Exhibits omitted.]

With this description of both the Chinese and European references, and of what they represent as a whole, in hand, we consider the proper application of the *Graham* standards and their effect upon the propriety of summary judgment in this case. See generally *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 17 [148 USPQ 459, 467] (1966); *Panduit Corp. v. Dennison*

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Manufacturing Co., 774 F.2d 1082, 227 USPQ 337 (Fed. Cir. 1985).

OPINION

A. Summary Judgment

Summary judgment, in patent as in other cases, is appropriate where there is no genuine issue of material fact, and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. See *Molinaro v. Fannon/Courier Corp.* 745 F.2d 651, 653-54, 223 USPQ 706, 707 (Fed. Cir. 1984). The movant bears the burden of demonstrating the absence of all genuine issues of material fact, and the district court must view the evidence in a light most favorable to the nonmoving party and draw all reasonable inferences in its favor. See *United States v. Diebold, Inc.*, 369 U.S. 654, 655 (1962); *Palumbo v. Don-Joy Co.*, 762 F.2d 969, 973, 226 USPQ 5, 7 (Fed. Cir. 1985). The party opposing summary judgment must show an evidentiary conflict on the record; mere denials or conclusory statements are not sufficient. *Barmag Barmer Maschinenfabrik AG v. Murata Machinery, Ltd.*, 731 F.2d 831, 836, 221 USPQ 561, 564 (Fed. Cir. 1984). Summary judgment is authorized where it is quite clear what the truth is. *Sartor v. Arkansas Natural Gas Corp.*, 321 U.S. 620, 627 (1944).

B. The Issues Below

The decision and opinion of the district court granting summary judgment dealt with two issues: the first was whether the '006 patent is invalid as anticipated under §102(b), the court holding it is not; and the second was whether the '006 patent is invalid for obviousness under §103, the court holding that it is. Hodosh of course appeals the summary judgment with respect to only the issue on which it lost -- obviousness and Block has not appealed. Because we are remanding for trial, however, we will comment briefly on anticipation to make it clear

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that we deem that question to have been conclusively disposed of in this case and because it is closely related to the obviousness issue.

1. Anticipation, §102(b)

We agree entirely with the district court's holding that the '006 patent is not invalid as anticipated because there is no issue of fact that none of the prior art references discloses every element of the claimed invention. This issue was, therefore, appropriately and properly disposed of by summary judgment.

We do not agree, however, with some of the district court's remarks about anticipation, in particular, that the unavailability of the Chinese references and whether one skilled in the art could locate them with "reasonable diligence" bears on whether those references anticipate the claimed subject matter. Whether a reference is available as prior art and whether it anticipates (i.e., contains every claimed element) are separate questions. Moreover, the district court's determination that the references are unavailable for §102 purposes seems to be inconsistent with the approach subsequently taken by the district court in determining obviousness. The court later used these same references to support its holding that the claimed subject matter would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to one of ordinary skill in the art.

2. Obviousness, §103

[1] Questions of material fact remain with respect to the meaning of various terms used in the Chinese and European references and we therefore hold that summary judgment on the ground of obviousness of the claimed invention was improper.

The district court's statement that ya tong means tooth hypersensitivity as well as tooth pain is the resolution of a head-on factual controversy. The court improperly drew the inference against Hodosh, the nonmoving party, that a statement about ya tong made to the German Patent Office by Dr. Hodosh's German patent agent was made with knowledge of the Chinese references. The statement in question occurred seven years after the '006 patent issued in connection with Dr. Hodosh's counterpart German application. The statement was: "The supersensitivity of dentine has been known for a long time and can be traced back 4000 years to the Chinese where it was known as 'Ya Tong'." Hodosh in this suit disclaims this statement urging that it was factual error.

There is no evidence that the above statement was based on the Chinese references or that Dr. Hodosh conveyed this information to the German patent agent. The important fact question as to the meaning of ya tong cannot be overcome simply by styling this statement an admission binding on Hodosh. Hodosh is entitled, as Block essentially concedes, to rebut the statement with evidence to the contrary. Hodosh will have that chance at trial.

Nor does the statement in the affidavit of Block's expert, Dr. Wei, that ya tong means tooth hypersensitivity eliminate the presence of the question of the meaning of ya tong. As the Supreme Court long ago observed, "Ex

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perience has shown that opposite opinions of persons professing to be experts, may be obtained to any amount. . . ." *Winans v. New York and Erie Railroad Co.*, 62 U.S. 88 (1859). The substance of Dr. Sklhar's affidavit on behalf of Hodosh goes far beyond merely denying that ya tong means tooth hypersensitivity and thus is more than adequate to show an evidentiary conflict on the record with respect to this crucial point, thus precluding summary judgment. *Cf. Union Carbide Corp. v. American Can Co.*, 724 F.2d 1567, 1571, 220 USPQ 584, 587-88 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

Furthermore, a genuine issue of material fact exists with respect to the meaning of the terms nitre, nitrum, and nitri as used in the European references. Dr. Sklhar's affidavit is more than adequate to withstand the challenge of this summary judgment motion. A reasonable inference that these terms are sodium, as opposed to potassium, compounds is permissible; Hodosh has shown an evidentiary conflict on the record. The European references, Dr. Sklhar explained in his affidavit, are based on the 77 A.D. writings of Pliny The Elder, who understood these terms

to mean "sodium carbonate and/or a sodium carbonate-sodium bicarbonate mixture."

The obviousness determination here, given the existence of genuine material issues of fact with respect to the meanings of terms used in these references, is not suitably disposed of by summary judgment under the rules pertaining thereto. *See generally Palumbo*, supra, and *Lemelson v. TRW, Inc.*, 760 F.2d 1254, 1260-61, 225 USPQ 697, 700-01 (Fed. Cir. 1985). The fact issues herein must be resolved by trial in which the conflicting views of the experts will be subject to the refining fire of cross examination, a more effective means of arriving at the legal conclusion of obviousness *vel non* than perusal of *ex parte* affidavits and declarations of partisan experts lobbed at each other from opposing trenches.

We observe, for the benefit of the trial court, that we are totally unimpressed by Block's forensic device of comparing the Rosenthal prior art toothpaste formula and the Hodosh toothpaste example in parallel columns and then asserting, as though it were filled with significant meaning, that the "only difference is the use of potassium nitrate in place of strontium chloride," or that "the Hodosh patent merely substitutes potassium nitrate for strontium chloride." This device was pushed to the limit in oral argument by pointing out that the Hodosh toothpaste has the *same* formula, *except* for the active desensitizing ingredient, down to the last decimal point. This argument is meaningless on the obviousness issue. "Sensodyne" and apparently other desensitizing toothpaste formulae being well known as commercial products, it is entirely clear that Dr. Hodosh's invention was the discovery of an apparently superior *desensitizing agent* and he never thought it was a toothpaste formula. He made that invention even if it should later be decided that it was known to the Chinese. It is apparent that Hodosh's patent solicitor merely adopted the prior art Rosenthal toothpaste base formula as a convenient example to illustrate the kind of a paste in which the Hodosh desensitizer might be used, which was within his right. The similarities -- indeed, identity -- of the paste bases is irrelevant in considering the issue of the unobviousness of the desensitizer. The Rosenthal patent, cited as prior art by Hodosh in his patent specification, was the jumping-off place for the description of his discovery. Hodosh does not claim to have been the first inventor of a desensitizing toothpaste; he claims to have improved it. The issue for trial is whether his improvement would have been obvious.⁵

C. Secondary Considerations

The district court refused on the motion for summary judgment to consider the evidence of secondary considerations. After acknowledging its existence and the arguments based on it, it stated:

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However, the court continues to find that the Hodosh patent is invalid on grounds of obviousness; these secondary considerations stem not from the novelty or inventiveness engendered by substituting potassium nitrate in an already existing formula, but from a lack of knowledge on the part of those in the field of the references here cited. That lack is here overcome by the presumption of omniscience discussed, *supra*, a rule of law by which the court is bound, whatever its merits.

[2] That secondary considerations are not considered unless there is evidence that those in the industry knew of the prior art is a non sequitur. Evidence of secondary considerations is considered independently of what any real person *knows* about the prior art. These considerations are *objective* criteria of obviousness that help illuminate the subjective determination involved in the hypothesis used to draw the legal conclusion of obviousness based upon the first three factual inquiries delineated in *Graham*. Thus, to require that actual inventors in the field have the omniscience of the hypothetical person in the art is not only contrary to case law, *see Kimberly-Clark v. Johnson & Johnson*, 745 F.2d 1437, 223 USPQ 603 (Fed. Cir. 1984), but eliminates a useful tool for trial judges faced with a nonobviousness determination.

The secondary consideration evidence of record and the additional evidence likely to be submitted at trial must be considered in the obviousness determination. *See generally Fromson v. Advance Offset Plate, Inc.*, 755 F.2d

1549, 1557, 225 USPQ 26, 32 (Fed. Cir. 1985).

Conclusion

The grant of summary judgment of invalidity is *reversed* and the case is *remanded* for trial in accordance with this opinion.

REVERSED AND REMANDED

Footnotes

Footnote 1. A certificate of reexamination confirming the patentability of claims 1-6 of the '006 patent was issued June 21, 1983, as a result of Hodosh's request for reexamination in 1982. Only one of the prior art references involved here, the Rosenthal patent, *infra*, was considered in the reexamination.

Footnote 2. Block also initiated regulatory proceedings designed to delay or prevent Richardson-Vicks' marketing of "Denquel." Block, having allegedly failed to comply with Food and Drug Administration (FDA) procedures before marketing "Promise" and "Sensodyne-F" in competitive response to Richardson-Vicks' introduction of "Denquel," is currently defending itself in forfeiture proceedings initiated by the FDA.

Footnote 3. The Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD) was marked by the restoration of traditional institutions in China and the development of the arts, especially in porcelain, textiles, and painting.

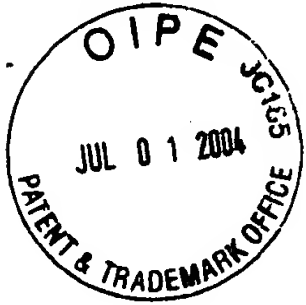
Footnote 4. Dr. Shklar is the Charles A. Brackett Professor of Oral Pathology at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, and is an acclaimed expert in dentistry. He is also an expert on the history of dentistry and holds membership in the American Academy of the History of Dentistry.

Footnote 5. Our comments on the district court's obviousness determination generally include the following tenets of patent law that must be adhered to when applying §103: (1) the claimed invention must be considered as a whole (35 USC 103; *see, e.g., Jones v. Hardy*, 727 F.2d 1524, 1529, 220 USPQ 1021, 1024 (Fed. Cir. 1984) (though the difference between claimed invention and prior art may seem slight, it may also have been the key to advancement of the art)); (2) the references must be considered as a whole and suggest the desirability and thus the obviousness of making the combination (*see, e.g., Lindemann Maschinenfabrik GmbH v. American Hoist and Derrick Co.*, 730 F.2d 1452, 1462, 221 USPQ 481, 488 (Fed. Cir. 1984); (3) the references must be viewed without the benefit of hindsight vision afforded by the claimed invention (*e.g., W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc. v. Garlock, Inc.*, 721 F.2d 1540, 1553, 220 USPQ 303, 313 (Fed. Cir. 1983)); (4) "ought to be tried" is not the standard with which obviousness is determined (*Jones, supra*, 727 F.2d at 1530, 220 USPQ at 1026); and (5) the presumption of validity remains constant and intact throughout litigation (35 USC 285; *e.g., American Hoist & Derrick Co. v. Sowa & Sons, Inc.*, 725 F.2d 1350, 1359-60, 220 USPQ 763, 770 (Fed. Cir. 1984)).

- End of Case -

FULL TEXT OF CASES (USPQ2D)

All Other Cases

**In re Fine (CA FC) 5 USPQ2d 1596 In re Fine****U.S. Court of Appeals Federal Circuit
5 USPQ2d 1596****Decided January 26, 1988
No. 87-1319****Headnotes****PATENTS****1. Patentability/Validity -- Obviousness -- Evidence of (§ 115.0903)**

Patent and Trademark Office improperly rejected claimed invention for obviousness since nothing in cited references, either alone or in combination, suggests or teaches claimed invention, since there is consequently no support for PTO's conclusion that substitution of one type of detector for another in prior art system, resulting in claimed invention, would have been obvious, and since PTO therefore failed to satisfy its burden of establishing prima facie case of obviousness by showing some objective teaching or generally available knowledge that would lead one skilled in art to combine teachings of existing references.

2. Patentability/Validity -- Obviousness -- In general (§ 115.0901)

Obviousness is tested by what combined teachings of prior art references would have suggested to those of ordinary skill in art, not by whether particular combination of elements from such references might have been "obvious to try."

3. Patentability/Validity -- Obviousness -- Evidence of (§ 115.0903)

Patent and Trademark Office erred, in rejecting as obvious system for detecting and measuring minute quantities of nitrogen compounds, by failing to recognize that appealed claims can be distinguished over combination of prior art references, in view of evidence demonstrating that prior art does not teach claimed temperature range, despite some overlap of preferred temperature ranges for claimed invention and prior art, since purposes of preferred temperature ranges are different and overlap is mere happenstance.

4. Patentability/Validity -- Obviousness -- In general (§ 115.0901)

Dependent claims are non-obvious under 35 USC 103 if claims from which they depend are non-obvious.

Case History and Disposition:

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Appeal from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences.

Application for patent by David H. Fine, Serial No. 512,374. From decision of Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences affirming rejection of application, applicant appeals. Reversed; Smith, circuit judge, dissenting with opinion.

Attorneys:

Morris Relson and Darby & Darby, New York, N.Y., (Beverly B. Goodwin with them on the brief) for appellant.

Lee E. Barrett, associate solicitor, Arlington, Va., (Joseph F. Nakamura, solicitor, and Fred E. McKelvey, deputy solicitor, with him on the brief) for appellee.

Judge:

Before Friedman, Smith, and Mayer, circuit judges.

Opinion Text

Opinion By:

Mayer, J.

David H. Fine appeals from a decision of the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (Board) affirming the rejection of certain claims of his application, Serial No. 512,374, and concluding that his invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art and was therefore

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unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103. We reverse.

Background

A. The Invention .

The invention claimed is a system for detecting and measuring minute quantities of nitrogen compounds. According to Fine, the system has the ability to detect the presence of nitrogen compounds in quantities as minute as one part in one billion, and is an effective means to detect drugs and explosives, which emanate nitrogen compound vapors even when they are concealed in luggage and closed containers. The claimed invention has three major components: (1) a gas chromatograph which separates a gaseous sample into its constituent parts; (2) a converter which converts the nitrogen compound effluent output of the chromatograph into nitric oxide in a hot, oxygen-rich environment; and (3) a detector for measuring the level of nitric oxide. The claimed invention's sensitivity is achieved by combining nitric oxide with ozone to produce nitrogen dioxide which concurrently causes a detectable luminescence. The luminescence, which is measured by a visual detector, shows the level of nitric oxide which in turn is a measure of nitrogen compounds found in the sample.

The appealed claims were rejected by the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) under 35 U.S.C. §103. Claims 60, 63, 77 and 80 were rejected as unpatentable over Eads, Patent No. 3,650,696 (Eads) in view of Warnick, et al., Patent No. 3,746,513 (Warnick). Claims 62, 68, 69, 79, 85 and 86 were rejected as unpatentable over Eads and Warnick in view of Glass, et al., Patent No. 3,207,585 (Glass).

B. The Prior Art .

1. Eads Patent .

Eads discloses a method for separating, identifying and quantitatively monitoring sulfur compounds. The Eads system is used primarily in "air pollution control work in the scientific characterization of odors from sulfur compounds."

The problem addressed by Eads is the tendency of sulfur compounds "to adhere to or react with the surface materials of the sampling and analytical equipment, and/or react with the liquid or gaseous materials in the equipment." Because of this, the accuracy

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of measurement is impaired. To solve the problem, the Eads system collects an air sample containing sulfur compounds in a sulfur-free methanol solution. The liquid is inserted into a gas chromatograph which separates the various sulfur compounds. The compounds are next sent through a pyrolysis furnace where they are oxidized to form sulfur dioxide. Finally, the sulfur dioxide passes through a measuring device called a microcoulometer which uses titration cells to calculate the concentration of sulfur compounds in the sample.

2. Warnick Patent .

Warnick is directed to a means for detecting the quantity of pollutants in the atmosphere. By measuring the chemiluminescence of the reaction between nitric oxide and ozone, the Warnick device can detect the concentration of nitric oxide in a sample gaseous mixture.

Warnick calls for "continuously flowing" a sample gaseous mixture and a reactant containing ozone into a reaction chamber. The chemiluminescence from the resulting reaction is transmitted through a light-transmitting element to produce continuous readouts of the total amount of nitric oxide present in the sample.

3. Glass Patent.

The invention disclosed in Glass is a device for "completely burning a measured amount of a substance and analyzing the combustion products." A fixed amount of a liquid petroleum sample and oxygen are supplied to a flame. The flame is then spark-ignited, causing the sample to burn. The resulting combustion products are then collected and measured, and from this measurement the hydrogen concentration in the sample is computed.

C. The Rejection .

The Examiner rejected claims 60, 63, 77 and 80 because "substitution of the [nitric oxide] detector of Warnick for the sulfur detector of Eads would be an obvious consideration if interested in nitrogen compounds, and would yield the claimed invention." He further asserted that "Eads teaches the [claimed] combination of chromatograph, combustion, and detection, in that order. . . . Substitution of detectors to measure any component of interest is well within the skill of the art." In rejecting claims 62, 68, 69, 79, 85 and 86, the Examiner said, "Glass et al. teach a flame conversion means followed by a detector, and substitution of the flame conversion means of Glass et al. for the furnace of Eads would be an obvious equivalent and would yield the claimed invention." The Board affirmed the Examiner's rejection.

Discussion

A. Standard of Review .

Obviousness under 35 U.S.C. §103 is " 'a legal conclusion based on factual evidence.' " *Stratoflex, Inc. v. Aeroquip Corp.* , 713 F.2d 1530, 1535, 218 USPQ 871, 876 (Fed. Cir. 1983) (quoting *Stevenson v. Int'l Trade Comm'n* , 612 F.2d 546, 549, 204 USPQ 276, 279 (CCPA 1979)). Therefore, an obviousness determination is not reviewed under the clearly erroneous standard applicable to fact findings, *Raytheon Co. v. Roper Corp.* , 724 F.2d 951, 956, 220 USPQ 592, 596 (Fed. Cir. 1983); it is "reviewed for correctness or error as a matter of law." *In re De Blauwe* , 736 F.2d 699, 703, 222 USPQ 191, 195 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

To reach a proper conclusion under §103, the decisionmaker must step backward in time and into the shoes worn by [a person having ordinary skill in the art] when the invention was unknown and just before it was made. In light of *all* the evidence, the decisionmaker must then determine whether . . . the claimed invention as a whole would have been obvious at *that* time to *that* person. 35 U.S.C. §103. The answer to that question partakes more of the nature of law than of fact, for it is an ultimate conclusion based on a foundation formed of all the probative facts.

Panduit Corp. v. Dennison Mfg. Co. , 810 F.2d 1561, 1566, 1 USPQ2d 1593, 1595-96 (Fed. Cir. 1987).

B. Prima Facie Obviousness .

Fine says the PTO has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness. He contends the references applied by the Board and Examiner were improperly combined, using hindsight reconstruction, without evidence to support the combination and in the face of contrary teachings in the prior art. He argues that the appealed claims were rejected because the PTO thought it would have been "obvious to try" the claimed invention, an unacceptable basis for rejection.

[1] We agree. The PTO has the burden under section 103 to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. *See In re Piasecki* , 745 F.2d 1468, 1471-72, 223 USPQ 785, 787-87 (Fed. Cir. 1984). It can satisfy this burden only by showing some objective teaching in the prior art or that knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art would lead that individual to combine the relevant teachings of the references. *In re Lulu* , 747 F.2d 703, 705, 223 USPQ 1257, 1258 (Fed. Cir. 1984); *see also Ashland Oil, Inc. v. Delta Resins & Refractories, Inc.* ,

776 F.2d 281, 297 n.24, 227 USPQ 657 , 667 n.24 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *ACS Hosp. Sys., Inc. v. Montefiore Hosp.* , 732 F.2d 1572, 1577, 221 USPQ 929, 933 (Fed. Cir. 1984). This it has not done. The Board points to nothing in

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the cited references, either alone or in combination, suggesting or teaching Fine's invention.

The primary basis for the Board's affirmance of the Examiner's rejection was that it would have been obvious to substitute the Warnick nitric oxide detector for the Eads sulfur dioxide detector in the Eads system. The Board reiterated the Examiner's bald assertion that "substitution of one type of detector for another in the system of Eads would have been within the skill of the art," but neither of them offered any support for or explanation of this conclusion.

Eads is limited to the analysis of sulfur compounds. The particular problem addressed there is the difficulty of obtaining precise measurements of sulfur compounds because of the tendency of sulfur dioxide to adhere to or react with the sampling analytic equipment or the liquid or gaseous materials in the equipment. It solves this problem by suggesting that the gaseous sample containing sulfur compounds be absorbed into sulfur-free methanol and then inserted into a gas chromatograph to separate the sulfur compounds.

There is no suggestion in Eads, which focuses on the unique difficulties inherent in the measurement of sulfur, to use that arrangement to detect nitrogen compounds. In fact, Eads says that the presence of nitrogen is undesirable because the concentration of the titration cell components in the sulfur detector is adversely affected by substantial amounts of nitrogen compounds in the sample. So, instead of suggesting that the system be used to detect nitrogen compounds, Eads deliberately seeks to avoid them; it warns against rather than teaches Fine's invention. *See W. L. Gore & Assoc. v. Garlock, Inc.*, 721 F.2d 1540, 1550, 220 USPQ 303, 311 (Fed. Cir. 1983) (error to find obviousness where references "diverge from and teach away from the invention at hand"). In the face of this, one skilled in the art would not be expected to combine a nitrogen-related detector with the Eads system. Accordingly, there is no suggestion to combine Eads and Warnick.

Likewise, the teachings of Warnick are inconsistent with the claimed invention, to some extent. The Warnick claims are directed to a gas stream from engine exhaust "continuously flowing the gaseous mixtures into the reaction chamber" to obtain "continuous readouts" of the amount of nitric oxide in the sample. The other words, it contemplates measuring the total amount of nitric oxide in a continuously flowing gaseous mixture of unseparated nitrogen constituents. By contrast, in Fine each nitrogen compound constituent of the gaseous sample is retained in the Chromatograph for an individual time period so that each exists in discrete, time-separated pulses. * By this process, each constituent may be both identified by its position in time sequence, and measured. The claimed system, therefore, diverges from Warnick and teaches advantages not appreciated or contemplated by it.

Because neither Warnick nor Eads, alone or in combination, suggests the claimed invention, the Board erred in affirming the Examiner's conclusion that it would have been obvious to substitute the Warnick nitric oxide detector for the Eads sulfur dioxide detector in the Eads system. *ACS Hosp. Sys.*, 732 F.2d at 1575-77, 221 USPQ at 931-33. The Eads and Warnick references disclose, at most, that one skilled in the art might find it obvious to try the claimed invention. But whether a particular combination might be "obvious to try" is not a legitimate test of patentability. *In re Geiger*, 815 F.2d 868, 688, 2 USPQ2d 1276, 1278 (Fed. Cir. 1987); *In re Goodwin*, 576 F.2d 375, 377, 198 USPQ 1, 3 (CCPA 1978).

[2] Obviousness is tested by "what the combined teachings of the references would have suggested to those of ordinary skill in the art." *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 425, 208 USPQ 871, 881 (CCPA 1981). But it "cannot be established by combining the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching or suggestion supporting the combination." *ACS Hosp. Sys.*, 732 F.2d at 1577, 221 USPQ at 933. And "teachings of references can be combined *only* if there is some suggestion or incentive to do so." *Id.* Here, the prior art contains none.

Instead, the Examiner relies on hindsight in reaching his obviousness determination.

But this court has said, "To imbue one of ordinary skill in the art with knowledge of the invention in suit, when no prior art reference or references of record convey or suggest that knowledge, is to fall victim to the insidious effect

of a hindsight syndrome wherein that which only the inventor taught is used against its teacher." *W. L. Gore* , 721 F.2d at 1553, 220 USPQ at 312-13. It is essential that "the decisionmaker forget what he or she has been taught at trial about the claimed invention and cast the mind back to the time the invention was made . . . to occupy the mind of one skilled in the art who is presented only with the references, and who is normally guided by the then-accepted wisdom in the art." *Id* . One cannot use hindsight reconstruction to pick and choose among isolated disclosures in the prior art to deprecate the claimed invention.

C. Advantage Not Appreciated by the Prior Art .

[3] The Board erred not only in improperly combining the Eads and Warnick references but also in failing to appreciate that the appealed claims can be distinguished over that combination. A material limitation of the claimed system is that the conversion to nitric oxide occur in the range of 600°C to 1700°C. The purpose of this limitation is to prevent nitrogen from other sources, such as the air, from being converted to nitric oxide and thereby distorting the measurement of nitric oxide derived from the nitrogen compounds of the sample. The claimed nitric oxide conversion temperature is not disclosed in Warnick. Although Eads describes a preferred temperature of 675°C to 725°C, the purpose of this range is different from that of Fine. Eads requires the 675°C to 725°C range because it affords a temperature low enough to avoid formation of unwanted sulfur trioxide, yet high enough to avoid formation of unwanted sulfides. Fine's temperature range, in contrast, does not seek to avoid the formation of sulfur compounds or even nitrogen compounds. It enables the system to break down the nitrogen compounds of the sample while avoiding the destruction of background nitrogen gas. There is a partial overlap, of course, but this is mere happenstance. Because the purposes of the two temperature ranges are entirely unrelated, Eads does not teach use of the claimed range. *See In re Geiger* , 815 F.2d at 688, 2 USPQ2d at 1278. The Board erred by concluding otherwise.

D. Unexpected Results .

Because we reverse for failure to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, we need not reach Fine's contention that the Board failed to accord proper weight to the objective evidence of unexpected superior results. *Id* .

E. The "Flame" Claims .

[4] Claims 62, 68, 69, 79, 85 and 86 relate to the oxygen-rich flame conversion means of the claimed invention. These "flame" claims depend from either apparatus claim 60 or method claim 77. Dependent claims are nonobvious under section 103 if the independent claims from which they depend are nonobvious. *Hartness Int'l, Inc. v. Simplimatic Eng'g Co .*, 819 F.2d 1100, 1108, 2 USPQ2d 1826, 1831 (Fed. Cir. 1987); *In re Abele* , 684 F.2d 902, 910, 214 USPQ 682, 689 (CCPA 1982); *see also In re Sernaker* , 702 F.2d 989, 991, 217 USPQ 1, 3 (Fed. Cir. 1983). In view of our conclusion that claims 60 and 77 are nonobvious, the dependent "flame" claims are also patentable.

Conclusion

The Board's decision affirming the Examiner's rejection of claims 60, 62, 63, 68, 69, 77, 79, 80, 85 and 86 of Fine's application as unpatentable over the prior art under 35 U.S.C. §103 is *REVERSED* .

Footnotes

Footnote *. The Solicitor argues that the contents of Attachment C of Fine's brief were not before the Board and may not properly be considered here. However, we need not rely on Attachment C. It is merely illustrative of the qualitative separation of nitrogen compounds which occurs in Fine's system. The fact that the various constituents exit at discrete intervals is shown by the specification which was before the Board and which may appropriately be

considered on appeal. *See, e.g., Astra-Sjuco, A.B. v. United States Int'l Trade Comm'n*, 629 F.2d 682, 686, 207 USPQ 1, 5 (CCPA 1980) (claims must be construed in light of specification).

Dissenting Opinion Text

Dissent By:

Smith, circuit judge, dissenting.

I respectfully dissent. I am of the firm belief that the prior art references, relied upon by the PTO to establish its prima facie case of obviousness, in combination teach and suggest Fine's invention to one skilled in the art. Also, I firmly believe that Fine failed to rebut the PTO's prima facie case. On this basis, I would affirm the board's determination sustaining the examiner's rejection, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103, of Fine's claims on appeal before this court.

- End of Case -

